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September 26, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

WASHINGTON, D.C. UPDATE

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Reauthorization

Yesterday, the Senate adopted, 81 to 12, the conference report on H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA), which authorizes funding for Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps") water resource projects, including those of importance to the County's Departments of Public Works and Beaches and Harbors. The bill now goes to the President, who has threatened to veto it because of its cost. H.R. 1495 authorizes a total of \$23.2 billion in funding for projects over the next ten years. Members of Congress from both parties indicate that they will be able to override a veto. In August, the House adopted the conference report, 381 to 40, which, similar to the Senate vote, far exceeds the two-thirds majority required to override a veto.

H.R. 1495 includes authorizations for the following County projects:

- \$20 million in funding for the planning, design, and construction of water-related infrastructure for Santa Monica Bay and the coastal zone of Los Angeles County; and

- Corps studies of Ballona Lagoon Tide Gates Improvements; Dockweiler Bluffs Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration; and Nicholas Canyon Bluffs Shoreline Protection.

The bill also authorizes a Corps study of Ballona Creek Middle Jetty Beautification and \$25 million for a Corps Los Angeles River revitalization study to explore opportunities for environmental ecosystem restoration, flood control, and recreation, which were requested by the City of Los Angeles.

While WRDA authorizes funding for projects, actual funding for them must be provided through annual appropriations bills.

Community Partnership to End Homelessness Act of 2007 (S. 1518)

On September 19, 2007, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee approved, by voice vote, S. 1518 (Reed, D-RI), the Community Partnership to End Homelessness Act of 2007. The bill reauthorizes McKinney-Vento Homeless Act programs, and consolidates three current McKinney-Vento competitive grant programs into a single grant program. It authorizes \$2.2 billion in FFY 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for FFY 2009 through 2012 for the grant program. As provided in the draft bill marked up by the Committee, S. 1518 would:

- Expand the definition of homeless to include: 1) individuals living in hotels or motels paid for by Federal, State or local programs for low-income persons, 2) an individual or family who lives with another person or in a hotel or motel due to lack of resources, 3) an individual or family who has changed primary residence three times in the past year or two times in the past 21 days, or 4) an individual or family who lacks the resources to pay for a motel or hotel for more than a short period of time;
- Define chronically homeless as an individual or family who: 1) resides in a place not meant for human habitation, 2) has been homeless for at least one year or four separate occasions in eight years, 3) has an adult or minor head of household with a diagnosable physical or mental impairment, or 4) has resided in institutional care for less than 90 days and was homeless prior to placement;
- Require the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to release its annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) no later than three months after enactment of each year's appropriations bill and award grants no later than five months after the NOFA's release;

- Combine the Homeless Prevention and Housing Stability Program and the Emergency Shelter Grant Program into a newly created Emergency Solutions Program, which would receive 20 percent of the total homeless assistance funding of which at least 40 percent would go to homelessness prevention services;
- Include service coordination as a housing operating cost; and
- Establish a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs in HUD to ensure veterans have access to housing and homeless assistance and to serve as a liaison with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The bill and committee report language for S. 1518 have not yet been printed, and the bill has not yet been scheduled for Senate floor action.

Gang Abatement and Prevention Act of 2007

On September 21, 2007, the Senate passed by voice vote, S. 456 (Feinstein, D-CA), the Gang Abatement and Prevention Act of 2007. The bill would authorize more than \$1.0 billion over the next five years for a coordinated approach that will combine Federal, State, and local anti-gang law enforcement efforts, expanded witness protection, and gang prevention services. This amount includes the following authorizations:

- \$375 million for a newly established High Intensity Interstate Gang Activity Area Program, half of which is for enforcement and half of which is for prevention and intervention in heavily gang-impacted areas;
- \$270 million for new witness protection grants;
- \$125 million for a new gang prevention block grant;
- \$100 million for grants to state and local governments to hire more prosecutors or fund equipment, technology, and training designed to target gang members;
- \$25 million for new grants to encourage innovative approaches to gang prevention and expanded after-school activities; and
- \$24 million for providing mentoring services to at-risk youth.

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The House Judiciary Committee has not yet scheduled a mark-up of H.R. 3547, the House companion bill, which Representative Schiff introduced on September 17, 2007.

Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) Reauthorization Bill (H.R. 2761)

Last week, the House passed, 312 to 110, H.R. 2761, a bill which reauthorizes the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) for an additional 15 years. Under TRIA, which was enacted in 2002 in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Federal government is obligated to pay for losses from a foreign terrorist attack that exceeds a certain threshold. The threshold for Federal aid is set at \$50 million in 2006 and \$100 million in 2007 under current law. Under H.R. 2761, the threshold would be \$50 million, subject to an overall cap of \$100 billion on Federal liability. Federal insurance also is expanded to cover losses from domestic as well as foreign terrorism. To avoid a Congressional Budget Office estimate that H.R. 2761 would increase Federal spending by an estimated \$8.4 billion over ten years, the bill was amended on the House floor to require Congress to expressly approve any Federal spending for the program following a terrorist attack. Without this amendment, "pay-as-you go" budget rules would require that the bill include \$8.4 billion in offsetting spending cuts or revenue increases.

The President is threatening to veto the bill because he opposes expanding the Federal government's role in terrorism reinsurance, and supports a far shorter extension with a higher private sector share of costs. The Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee has not yet scheduled action on TRIA reauthorization legislation.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:GK
MAL:MT:acn

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist